

Good governance as the second generation of reforms developed by international financial institutions for countries in the southern hemisphere to achieve development: ruptures, changes, and continuities

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Abstract

Following the process of decolonization in the second half of the twentieth century, the newly-independent countries adopted various strategies to emerge from underdevelopment, all strongly influenced by the ideological context of the time. From the 1950s onwards, most developing countries adopted industrialization strategies to the detriment of the agricultural sector. These strategies differed in terms of the role to be given to international trade: self-centered development seeking to replace imports with domestic industry, or extroverted development based on export promotion. Each of these strategies seeks to shift the structure of national production towards more sophisticated industrial products. Faced with the numerous failures of these strategies, the international financial institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) developed a development model to accompany their loans to developing countries: "structural adjustment". This liberal model required developing countries to stabilize their macroeconomic situation and liberalize their economies through the "Washington Consensus".) The financial crises experienced by many of the countries that followed this model in the 1990s and 2000s led to widespread criticism: the model was ill-suited to the specific characteristics of developing countries, and the measures were brutal and destabilizing for the economic and social structure of these countries (weakening of the state, etc.). Underdevelopment is thus due to the absence of institutions to support structural adjustment programs (SAPs). The latter must therefore be accompanied by additional reforms designed to create social institutions that facilitate liberal reforms. Thus, at the end of the 1990s, the "Washington Consensus" was supplemented by new measures: the introduction of corporate governance, the need to combat corruption and create a "safety net" in the form of social security, and the fight against poverty. As a result, the elaboration of a new development paradigm has revolved around several key ideas since 2000: relying on local institutions (in particular the State), accompanying economic measures with social and democratic policies to increase freedoms, recasting development strategies according to the principles of sustainable development and good governance. Good governance has thus become an absolute priority for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to counter the harmful effects of economic policies and restore hope to the populations of the South. We will begin by examining the origins of this notion, then explain its various meanings, show the different approaches that have been developed around this concept and finally develop our own point of view on North/South cooperation relations.

Keywords: World Bank, International Monetary Fund, southern hemisphere, development, underdevelopment, structural adjustment, poverty, decentralization, good governance.

INTRODUCTION

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strategies differed in terms of the role to be given to international trade: self-centered development, which sought to replace imports with domestic industry, or extroverted development based on export promotion. Each of these strategies seeks to shift the structure of national production towards more sophisticated industrial products. Faced with the numerous failures of these strategies, the international financial institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) developed a development model to accompany their loans to developing countries: "structural adjustment". This liberal model required developing countries to stabilize their macroeconomic situation and liberalize their economies through the "Washington Consensus".) The financial crises experienced by many of the countries that followed this model in the 1990s and 2000s led to widespread criticism: the model was ill-suited to the specific characteristics of developing countries, and the measures taken were brutal and destabilizing for the economic and social structure of these countries (weakening of the state, etc.). Underdevelopment is thus due to the absence of institutions to support structural adjustment programs (SAPs). These must therefore be accompanied by additional reforms to create social institutions that facilitate liberal reforms. Thus, at the end of the 1990s, the "Washington Consensus" was supplemented by new measures: the introduction of corporate governance, the need to combat corruption and create a "safety net" in the form of social security, and the fight against poverty. As a result, the elaboration of a new development paradigm has revolved around several key ideas since 2000: relying on local institutions (in particular the State), accompanying economic measures with social and democratic policies to increase freedoms, recasting development strategies according to the principles of sustainable development and good governance. Good governance has thus become an absolute priority for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to counter the harmful effects of economic policies and restore hope to the populations of the South. We will first look at the origins of this notion, then explain its various meanings, show the different approaches that have been developed around this concept and finally develop our own point of view on North/South cooperation relations.

1. *Governance*": a Greek concept rediscovered from the economy and the private sector

Of Greek etymology (*kubernân*), then taken up in Latin under the name *gubernare*, the concept of "governance", used in Old French as a synonym for government, *has over time* passed into English under the term *governance*. Historically, governance is not a new concept. It was rediscovered more than half a century ago by American economists, notably with the work of Ronald COASE¹, who heralded the birth of the firm as a mode of internal coordination that not only reduced transaction costs but also efficiently facilitated exchanges. His work had a profound influence on the current of institutional economics, which was developing rapidly in the United States, and which came to define this notion (governance) as "the mechanisms implemented by the firm to achieve effective coordination, which fall into two

categories: internal protocols when the firm is integrated (hierarchy), and contracts, partnerships and the use of standards when it opens up to subcontractors"².

A very fashionable term today in both the public and private spheres³, the concept of "governance" is also used in fields as diverse as institutional economics, international relations, public administration and the social sciences. It is also an integral part of the language of political and administrative science, making it an eminently polysemous notion, taking on a variety of meanings today, since from corporate governance (governance of monetary or employment policies, for example), we have ended up with political governance (urban, local, global or worldwide governance⁴, etc.)⁵.

² N. HOLEC and G. BRUNET-JOLIVALD, 1999, *Gouvernance*, dossier documentaire réalisé par le Centre de documentation de l'urbanisme, Association 4D (Dossiers et débats pour le développement durable), Arche de la défense, Paris, August, 92 p., p. 9.

³N. DECOOPMAN, 1996, "Du gouvernement des entreprises à la gouvernance", in J. CHEVALLIER, (Dir.), *La gouvernabilité*, Paris, PUF, pp. 105-113. In recent years, the principles of *corporate governance* have been developed at company level, notably on the basis of the Anglo-Saxon model, corresponding to the development of patrimonial or shareholder capitalism, dominated by pension fund managers and other institutional investors. This concept, which dates back to 1932 with the work of BERLE and MEANS on the consequences of the separation of ownership and management in large corporations, is today at the heart of debates on the functioning and performance of firms. Cf. C.-D. ECHAUDEMAISON, (Dir.), 2005, *Dictionnaire d'Économie et de Sciences Sociales*, Paris, Nathan, p. 239.

⁴ According to numerous studies carried out in recent years, global governance is the sector with the greatest legitimacy deficit. For example, in his book *La démocratie en miettes*, Paris, Descartes & Cie, Charles Léopold Mayer, 2003, 336 p., Pierre CALAME wrote: "On the one hand, current regulations are not equal to the interdependencies of today's global society. On the other hand, any initiative to reinforce these regulations will not meet with popular approval if the legitimacy of those that already exist is open to question. And this is the case: the UN is often perceived as a costly masquerade. Its democratic legitimacy is limited, squeezed between the veto power of a few large countries on the Security Council and the hypocrisy of the "one state, one vote" principle, which pretends to put Nepal, Burkina Faso and the USA on an equal footing. The same crisis of legitimacy applies to the World Bank and the IMF, which in practice have become tools for rich countries to use against poor countries. International rules laid down by faceless authorities with no clear mandate and no identifiable appeal body are proliferating, undermining the authority of these rules and their effectiveness, but also discrediting in the future the claim to formulate others, including in areas where the law of the jungle and the proliferation of injustices are denounced. All the more so as the coherence between the actions of UN agencies is not guaranteed, and they generally lack the financial and regulatory means to promote their ideas and enforce the rules they lay down. Current global governance, which is mainly based on relations between national states, has an accumulation of legitimacy deficits: those linked to the lack of legitimacy of the states themselves, and those linked to the modalities of relations between states". The author then proposes to strengthen the legitimacy of governance, above all from the local to the global level, on the basis of five axioms. First, it must respond to a need felt by the community. Then, it must be based on shared, recognized values and principles. Second, to be equitable. Better still, it must be exercised effectively by responsible and trustworthy leaders. Finally, it must apply the principle of least constraint.

⁵G. HERMET, A. KAZANCIGIL and J-F. PRUD'HOMME (Dir.), 2005, *La gouvernance. Un concept et ses applications*, Paris, Karthala, 232 p.

¹R. COASE, 1937, *The Nature of the firm*, *Economica*, Volume 4, n° 16, pp. 386-405.

2. *The polysemous nature of governance: from a debated concept to transformations in public action*

Governance" has emerged as an alternative solution to the crisis in the governability of societies. Some see it as a new definition of government, others as a new organization of power, and still others as a new way of governing society. Defined by Andrew CAROLINE "as the set of means by which a community gives itself direction for the future", the notion of governance goes beyond formal political institutions and includes "recognition of the multitude of actors - individuals, organizations and agencies - who take part in decisions to give it direction"⁶. Understood in this way, it "distinguishes itself from the notion of government, which remains associated with an organized, rational and coherent form of power"⁷.

The OXFORD English dictionary defines it as the way of governing, exercising control or authority over the actions of subjects, a system of regulation. The dictionnaire d'Économie et de Sciences Sociales defines it as a mode of control, coordination, and regulation exercised within complex economic or geopolitical entities of varying size⁸. As for the dictionnaire critique du territoire (critical dictionary of territory), which synthesizes other attempts to articulate this concept fairly well, it sees it in its current usage as an Anglicism that designates a way of approaching the question of government that does not give priority to the art of governing and the techniques of conducting action, but to the relations between the rulers and the ruled, notably between *civil society* and the State. From a completely different perspective, sociologist Abdoulaye NIANG⁹ points out that the concept of governance (good governance, that is) is closely linked to transparency and development. While it consists in the satisfactory management by public authorities of the community's needs and resources in areas where their responsibilities are involved, it depends on civil society and requires, according to the same author, in addition to transparency (transparency in the definition of needs, organization, and combination of resources), which is one of its fundamentals, a high degree of efficiency in the pursuit of the development objectives that the community has defined.

Another author, A. LEFTWITCH gives the following meaning to the notion of governance: it is "a political regime based on a liberal-democratic model that protects human and civil rights combined with a competent, non-corrupt, and accountable administration"¹⁰. However, such a reading of the concept of "governance" has been criticized for its moralizing, ethnocentric character, in that it considers liberal democracy to be the only

universal model. This is why authors such as Goran HYDEN¹¹ for example, by refusing to refer to the notions of pluralism, democracy, or freedom, preferred only to use the notion of governance, to dissociate it from any exclusive reference to a particular political regime, including the particular Western regime.

The theoretical interest of Goran HYDEN's analysis of the concept of governance lies in its distinction and dissociation from the notions of *government* or *leadership*. Indeed, unlike the term *government*, the concept of "governance" does not presuppose that real political authority is embodied somewhere, within the legal institutions of the state. Similarly, unlike the term *leadership*, the concept of governance does not presuppose that political authority necessarily belongs to the head of state or to official political elites. Following Goran HYDEN's approach, this concept allows us to suspend judgment as to the exact relationship between political authority and the form of society's institutions. In tracing the domain of "governance", the author identifies four properties of particular importance to effective governance. These are authority, reciprocity, trust, and responsibility. He defines "governance" as the conscious, organized management of regime structures with the aim of enhancing the legitimacy of the public sphere. It relates to the way in which rules (or structures) affect political action and the prospect of solutions to societal problems.

However, the author reminds us that there are conditions without which "governance" cannot function smoothly. These three main empirical dimensions of "governance" are citizen influence and oversight (degree of political participation, means of fusing choices, methods of holding public officials accountable), responsible and responsive leadership (degree of respect for the civic public sphere, degree of openness of political action, degree of adherence to the rule of law) and social reciprocity (degree of political equality, degree of tolerance between groups, degree of inclusion within associations).

However exciting Goran HYDEN's perspective may be, it nevertheless calls for a number of critical observations. On the contrary, other works, such as those by M. BRATTON and D. ROTHCHILD, for example, have shown that Goran HYDEN's approach is not the same as that of his colleagues. ROTHCHILD¹² for example, have shown that Goran HYDEN's approach is also unconsciously part of an ethnocentric logic, insofar as the criteria used by the author, namely citizen influence (political participation and political responsibility), government attentiveness (openness of policy, firm adherence to the law) and normative consensus (equality and tolerance), fall within the canons of liberal democracy. From the perspective of M. BRATTON and D. ROTHCHILD, governance is less about management and

⁶A. CAROLINE, 2000, "La gouvernance locale", *Relations*, pp. 75-77.

⁷P. LE GALES, 1995, "Du gouvernement des villes à la gouvernance urbaine", *Revue française de science politique*, vol. XLV, n° 1, pp.51-77.

⁸C.D. ECHAUDEMAISON, 2005, *Dictionnaire d'Économie et de Sciences Sociales*, Paris, Nathan, p. 239.

⁹A. NIANG, 2005, "Transparence, gouvernance et développement local : enjeux et acteurs de la décentralisation", in Jacques Habib SY (Dir.), *Sénégal. Finances publiques, décentralisation et transparence budgétaire*, Aide Transparence, pp. 83-156.

¹⁰A. LEFTWICH, 1993, "Governance, democracy and development in the Third World", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.14, n° 3, pp. 605-624.

¹¹G. HYDEN, 1992, "Gouvernance et étude de la politique", in G. HYDEN and M. BRATTON, *Gouverner l'Afrique. Vers un partage des rôles*, Paris, Nouveaux Horizons, pp. 1-38.

¹²M. BRATTON and D. ROTHCHILD, 1992, "Bases institutionnelles de la gouvernance en Afrique", in G. HYDEN and M. BRATTON, *Gouverner l'Afrique. Vers un partage des rôles*, Paris, Nouveaux horizons, pp. 373-405.

administration than about political management. According to the two authors, it emphasizes the creation and development of relationships based on reciprocity and exchange.

But while the World Bank can today take credit for having been the first to make *good governance* one of the main conditions for access to aid in its 1989 report, the fact remains - to use Gerhard BOCKE's expression¹³ - that the "new" credo of international donors owes its birth to the end of the Cold War and the dismantling of the Soviet Union. It was thanks to the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the author continues, that cooperation was able to make an ideological shift. In the same article, the author identifies four components of the notion of good governance:

- anchoring economic policies in the principles of the market economy,
- good governance,
- the establishment of a democratically elected government,
- respect for the rule of law and human rights.

As we can see, the notion of "governance" has been the subject of multiple interpretations. It continues to be the subject of debate, and analyses of the concept often highlight the diversity of approaches involved. However, despite significant nuances from author to author, we can see a number of converging trends. In a nutshell, the various analyses show that the content of the concept is manifold. Nevertheless, these conceptual works all agree on a number of indicators that characterize the concept of "governance": coordination, transparency, responsibility, reciprocity, etc. Very briefly, whether approached from the political, economic, institutional or community angle, etc., "governance" today emphasizes several types of transformation in the modalities of public action. Thus, an author such as Gerry STOKER¹⁴, who has studied this concept in depth, has come up with five proposals for a theory of governance:

- Governance involves a complex set of institutions and players, not all of which belong to the sphere of government.

"Governance" represents a break with the traditional, formal, legal and constitutional conception of government systems, by introducing new forms of regulation that go beyond the old hierarchical concepts. While government refers to the State's ability to make decisions and implement them by virtue of legitimate coercive power, the notion of governance has a broader, more flexible scope. It involves a complex set of public and private institutions and players in the provision of services and strategic decision-making. It places great emphasis on the co-participation of different networks. We are witnessing the arrival of sub-state players who share responsibilities with the state that were

previously almost exclusively the responsibility of central government.

- In a situation of governance, the boundaries and responsibilities are less clear-cut in the field of social and economic action.

While we agree with PUTMAN¹⁵ that "governance" is linked to the desire to develop social capital and create the social conditions necessary for effective economic and political activity, it is important to remember that this can only be achieved by redefining the relationship between the state and civil society, on the one hand, by blurring the boundaries between the public and private spheres, and, on the other, by encouraging civil society to express itself in the resolution of collective problems, without necessarily calling on public resources. This is why "governance" insists on a decomposition-recomposition of responsibilities, the partial withdrawal of the State, and its willingness to rely on the private and associative sectors and on citizens.

- Governance reflects the interdependence between the powers of the institutions involved in collective action.

Assuming that governing applies to any activity aimed at leading, controlling, or managing a society, or segments, sectors, or parts of it, governance expresses, to use Francis GODARD's formula¹⁶, highlighted by Etienne Badiane¹⁷, the new interactive forms of government in which private actors, different public organizations, groups or communities of citizens, or other types of actors, take part in the formulation of policy. In a "governance" situation, all the networks of actors involved in collective action must not only depend on each other but also cooperate, exchange, pool their resources and negotiate their participation in joint undertakings. It is the primacy of the interactive and cooperative process that is emphasized here, all the more so since, as J. KOOIMAN so aptly points out, no actor, public or private, has the knowledge and resources needed to tackle problems properly on their own.

- Governance involves networks of autonomous players

One of the realities of governance is the existence of networks of autonomous players. Similar to interest groups, they are set up to gain greater responsibility and possibly influence central government decisions. However, these networks need a certain degree of autonomy of action to be able to act properly in the direction of their initial objectives. All the same, internal problems can arise within networks. These may include constraints linked to group cohesion, organizational principles, the general interest, etc., which cumulatively may call into question the network's principle of responsibility.

- Governance is based on the principle that it is possible to act without relying on the power or authority of the state.

Faced with the fragmentation of public action, the need to find new forms of public regulation, such as governance, has become

¹³ G. BOCKE, 1997, "Intentions et réalités de la conditionnalité politique: l'expérience de la coopération allemande en Afrique (1990-1994)", in DALLOZ, J.-P. ET QUANTIN, P., (Dir.), *Transitions démocratiques africaines*, Paris, Karthala, pp. 217-241.

¹⁴ G. STOKER, 1998, "Cinq propositions pour une théorie de la gouvernance", *Revue internationale des sciences sociales*, n° 155, March, pp. 19-29.

¹⁵ E. BADIANE, 2004, *Développement urbain et dynamiques des acteurs locaux: le cas de Kaolack au Sénégal*. Doctoral thesis in geography and planning, Université Toulouse Le Mirail, p. 91.

¹⁶ F. GODARD, 1996, *Le gouvernement des villes : Territoire et pouvoir*, Paris, Descartes & Cie.

¹⁷ E. Badiane, *ibid*, p. 95.

increasingly apparent. In this way, with an institutional context more conducive to the emergence of initiatives such as regionalization and decentralization, we are currently witnessing a rise in the power of private and civil society players in the context of local development policies, for example. The key point here is the diminishing role of the state in favor of more diversified forms of intervention, integrating other networks of relatively autonomous players. In such a system of governance, the role of the state is to direct and guide collective action through a system of coordination, facilitation, guidance, and regulation.

The concept of "governance" can be approached from a number of different angles.

3. Different approaches to governance

The theme of "governance" has been the subject of many and varied theoretical elaborations. In this study, we propose to focus on three approaches to this notion. These are public governance, rural governance, and local governance.

A. public governance

Interest in the notion of governance has increased in the sphere of development cooperation. However, the concept of good governance is not new. In the deepest sense of the term, it presupposes the ongoing quest for sound, rational management of the state and public affairs, in the general interest and with the support of the people. In a similar way, it translates what the Greeks commonly call "*politikê*" in the etymological sense of the term, i.e. the action of sound, methodical management of the City in the general or national interest. Basically, what's really new is the almost organic correlation established between this notion, the political regime, and the process of economic development. In what follows, our analysis focuses on three main areas: on the one hand, the political dimension as a tool for market regulation by multilateral financial institutions; on the other, the parameters of good governance and the ambiguities of the notion of governance in the North/South cooperation system.

B. The political dimension as a market regulation tool

Launched by the World Bank at the end of the 1980s as part of a series of reviews of structural adjustment policies in Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Eastern Europe, the concept of good governance emerged in the language of international financial institutions as a major concept that has been, and still is, central to development policies. Emerging against a backdrop of economic crisis (failure of the Washington Consensus) and geopolitical reconfiguration (end of the bipolarization of the world into East and West blocs), this concept was promoted as a new political conditionality in international relations, and particularly in development cooperation¹⁸. The failure of structural adjustment programs, and their enormous social cost, led the Bretton Woods

institutions to a new perception of the importance of economic problems. In other words, in their studies, the experts from these organizations responsible for financing international development came to the conclusion that it was the faulty political-institutional framework of developing countries that was at the root of most of the economic problems encountered and that it had become impossible to solve everything through economic reforms and continue to relegate political and social issues to the background. As we read in the introduction to the 1989 report on sub-Saharan Africa, for the World Bank, the root causes of the continent's weak performance are to be found, among other things, in the shortcomings of its institutions:

*"Private sector initiative and market mechanisms are important, but they must go hand in hand with good administration, an efficient civil service, a reliable judiciary, and an accountable administration (...). In the final analysis, better government requires political renewal, which means a relentless fight against corruption at all levels. This requires setting an example by strengthening accountability, encouraging open and public debate, and supporting a free press"*¹⁹.

In this way, the idea that the political dimension in these less advanced countries was a serious handicap to the promotion of the market and free trade gradually took hold. The same is true of development projects, which, according to World Bank specialists, could not succeed without a minimum of political legitimacy on the part of the ruling elites. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that such institutions lacked the prerogatives that would enable them to intervene directly in the political arena, a domain beyond their remit. While recognizing the need for political renewal, these institutions could not really get involved in the political arena by urging partner countries to opt for a particular type of regime. In this respect, they essentially had to comply with their status as development banks, which confers on them a non-political mandate but rather a function of promoting economic and social development. For this reason, these organizations, which are highly sensitive to the success of their lending and financing programs, will implicitly make a paradigm shift, resorting in particular to the flagship concept of governance, which has the major advantage for them of allowing eminently political issues to be couched in technical terms²⁰ and of avoiding overt talk of "state reform" or "social and political change", at the risk of being particularly vulnerable to criticism of interference in the internal affairs of debtor states.

This notion has been broadened and integrated, so to speak, into a deliberately but indirectly political concept at the service of the

¹⁸M. HUFTY and A. DORMEIER FREIRE (Dir.), 2007, *Jeux de gouvernance : regards et réflexions sur un concept*, Geneva, Institut universitaire d'études du développement, Paris, Karthala, 242 p.

¹⁹ World Bank, 1989, *Sub-Saharan Africa. From crisis to sustainable growth*. Washington DC, World Bank Publications, XII.

²⁰ E. Badianne, 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

economy. Yet Michael BRATTON and Donald ROTHCHILD²¹ were right early on to draw attention in the field of scientific research to the fact that, for a long time, social scientists tended to concentrate on economic problems, and remained effectively ignorant of the highly important political dimensions of the process. But, in reality, what is often forgotten is that this gradual politicization of the concept, which developed, as we have seen, through the painful application of structural adjustment policies, was only made possible by borrowing from the paradigms of institutional economics²², in full expansion in the United States at the time — for which, governance is the institutional framework that makes it possible to aim for greater control of transaction costs— on the part of international financial institutions to give efficiency to their new approach. As Annick OSMONT analyzes²³, the launch of this concept was aimed at reviving a rather contested operational machine by endeavoring to address, with

²¹ M. BRATTON and D. ROTHCHILD, 1992, "Bases institutionnelles de la gouvernance en Afrique", in G. HYDEN and M. BRATTON, *Gouverner l'Afrique. Vers un partage des rôles*, Paris, Nouveaux horizons, pp. 373-405.

²² The World Bank has drawn on the work of the political economy movement to support its general discourse on reforming the state and redefining its role in the economy. Many currents have theorized on this theme, starting with the New Political Economy current (notably rent-seeking theory, founded by TULLOCK, G., 1967, "The welfare Costs of Tariffs, Monopolies and Theft", in *Western Economic Journal*, pp.224-232, n° 5., and theorists BHAGWATI, J., 1976, "Illegal Transactions in International Trade", *Studies in International Economics*, n° 1, North Holland; KRUEGER, A., 1974, "The Political Economy of Rentseeking Society", in *The American Review*, n° 6.; SRINIVASAN, T.N. And BHAGWATI, T.N., 1978, "Shadow Prices for Project Selection in the Presence of Distortions: Effective Rates of Protection and Domestic Resource Costs", in *Journal of Political Economy*, vol.86, n° 1.) and the Directly Unproductive Profit-seeking theory with BHAGWATI, J., 1982, "Directly Unproductive Profit-Seeking (DUP) Activities", in *Journal of Political Economy*, pp. 988-1002; BHAGWATI, J., BRECHER, R. and SRINIVASAN, T., 1984, "DUP Activities and Economic Theory", in COLANDER, D., (Dir.), *Neoclassical Political Economy: The Analysis of Rent-Seeking and DUP Activities*, pp.17-32, Cambridge MA, Ballinger Publishing CIE), then the current of neo-institutional analysis (see for example OLSON, M., 1971, *The logic of Collective Action*, Cambridge M.A., Harvard University Press; BATES, R.H., 1981, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies*, Berkeley, University of California Press; BATES, R., 1983, *Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; NORTH, D.C., 1984, "Three Approaches to the Study of Institutions", COLANDER, D., *Neoclassical Political Economy: The Analysis of Rent-seeking and DUP Activities*, pp.33-40, Cambridge M.A., Ballinger Publishing CIE, NORTH, D.C., 1990, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; WILLIAMSON, O.- E.E., 1994, *Les institutions de l'économie*, Paris and finally the current of civil society theories (SOTO, H., 1986, *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*, New York, Harper and Row Publishers, 1990 for the English edition; HYDEN, G., 1980, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry*, Berkeley, University of California Press; HYDEN, G., 1983, *No Short Cuts to Progress*, Berkeley, University of California Press; HYDEN, G., 1985, "La crise africaine et la paysannerie non capturée", in *Politique Africaine*, pp. 93-113, n° 18, June. For further information on this subject, see especially Béatrice HIBOU and Richard BANEGAS, 2000, "Société civile et espace public en Afrique", in *Bulletin du Codesria* n° 1, pp. 40-46.

²³ A. OSMONT, 1998, "Les villes, la gouvernance, la démocratie locale: réflexions sur l'expertise", pp. 175-190; "La gouvernance, concept mou, politique ferme", in *Annales de la recherche urbaine*, Paris, n° 80-81, pp. 19-25.

varying degrees of care, the entire institutional framework of adjustment, the site of much resistance at the time. The aim was to take into account the institutional incompetence of developing countries and the failures observed almost everywhere in implementing the "macro-economic and sectoral structural reforms essential to the generalized opening up of markets".

With this in mind, the partnership policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund include a section on "good governance". For these Bretton Woods institutions, the notion of governance is closely linked to the administration of public affairs. Essentially based on the principles of the rule of law, efficiency, accountability, and transparency, this notion constitutes "an ideological instrument for a minimum state policy". As confirmed by the High Council for International Cooperation (HCCI), since the 1980s, it has dominated the World Bank's :

"A non-interventionist, minimalist vision of the state and a strictly functionalist, instrumentalist conception that reduces it to the question of technical management of public resources, leaving aside the sphere of politics as the place for determining a project for society, in favor of an approach in terms of procedures, rules and the creation of market-regulating institutions".

However, one question remains unanswered: is the establishment of a liberal legal-political model sufficient to guarantee transparency and efficiency in the management of resources and the prevention of corruption?

C. The parameters of good governance: unburdening the state and strengthening civil society

As already mentioned, the concept of "governance" was given a new dimension in the public sphere in the discourse on development in Africa when the World Bank²⁴ noted that good governance had been the main missing bridge in the continent's development due to the shortcomings (excessive personalization of power, denial of fundamental human rights, widespread corruption, etc.) in the methods of government²⁵. According to this institution, the anarchic expansion of the public sector, mainly in urban areas, driven by the imperatives of enlarged state reproduction, has intensified the tendency to multiply economic irrationalities and distort the model of accumulation²⁶. It was against this backdrop that the World Bank, faced with repeated failures in the management of public affairs, made a strategic about-turn, shifting

²⁴G. BOCKE, 1997, "Intentions et réalités de la conditionnalité politique : l'expérience de la coopération allemande en Afrique (1990-1994)", in Jean Pascal DALLOZ, Patrick QUANTIN, *Transitions démocratiques africaines*, Paris, Karthala, pp. 217-241.

²⁵ I. ROUSSEAU, 2005, "Réforme de l'État et gouvernance dans les pays en voie de démocratisation", in G. HERMET, A. KAZANCIGIL and J-F. PRUD'HOMME (Dir.), *La gouvernance. Un concept et ses applications*, Paris, Karthala, pp. 119-147.

²⁶ This situation leads Pierre JACQUEMOT to observe that it is rare for such a process, over a sufficiently significant period of time, to have resulted in any regulation of efficient inter-sectoral economic flows, profitable public investment programs or the coverage of recurrent costs. Pierre JACQUEMOT, "La désétatisation en Afrique subsaharienne, enjeux et perspectives", in *Revue Tiers-monde*, tome xxix, n° 111, pp. 271-293.

its focus to the reform of state institutions and the nature of the links between them and civil society. With this in mind, it was recommended that countries undergoing adjustment in sub-Saharan Africa radically transform the role of the state²⁷. In this way, good governance, defined by the World Bank as: "a public service that is efficient a judicial system that is reliable, and an administration that is accountable to its public"²⁸, is perceived as a new political conditionality that should resolve the key issue of Africa's future development²⁹. It is based on a number of essential conditions:

- *Transparency*³⁰, which implies a break with budgetary excesses and a now sound management of public services, facilitated by the implementation of effective control mechanisms. This approach guarantees effective results by placing collective interests at the service of the nation and its people. But this presupposes mastery of the administrative and technical machinery, knowledge of management practices, and constant information of the population. This is the full import of Abdoulaye NIANG's remarks when he notes that transparency implies, on the part of those who are supposed to practice it, knowledge and mastery of the procedures in place, and on the part of those who are supposed to control it, knowledge not only of their rights to control but also of the appropriate means and techniques of control to measure the legality or conformity of actions;

- *Responsibility*, which means that local government is able to make autonomous decisions in the political, economic, and social spheres; in other words, it has the freedom to act in order to manage the interests and concerns of the community. In return, however, local authorities have a duty to keep citizens informed. This is the meaning of the term "accountability";

- *Popular participation*, which means that local and social players, through civil society organizations, must be involved upstream and

downstream of the decision-making process to have a real say in collective choices. It must lead to a process of appropriation after a rich experience of consultations, negotiations, and training at local level;

- *Effectiveness*, which allows us to see the expected effects (yields, productivity) of the programs undertaken. It is based on technical mastery of the problems and is measured by the operational solutions provided;

- *The rule of law*, which establishes a set of operating rules to be implemented on a practical level: promoting ethics and morality, combating abuse of power, fighting corruption, freedom of expression for civil society and political parties, neutral and fair justice, free, transparent and pluralist elections, etc.

In short, for the international financial institution, good governance implies political renewal based on independence of the judiciary, accountability of representative bodies, less unpredictable and less uncertain management and administration, transparency (determined fight against corruption at the bottom and top), and the establishment of the rule of law. As for the strict concept of governance, it has appeared in the language of the World Bank to designate: "As the manner in which power in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development or the manière don't le pouvoir est exercé dans la gestion des ressources économiques et sociales d'un pays"³¹. By distinguishing between three aspects of "governance"³², the World Bank has retained four dimensions of this concept to reorient the role of the state. These are:

- First, public sector management;
- Then, empowerment;
- Next, the legal framework for development;
- Finally, information and transparency.

The goal is to have a legitimate, transparent state with a strong sense of responsibility and national service that can fulfill the following three main responsibilities:

- Charting a course for economic growth ;
- Broadening participation in the development process ;
- Reconnecting the State with civil society³³.

With this reconnection between the State and civil society, roles are now shared. The State is no longer the only legitimate national player in international cooperation. It is now obliged, under the injunctions of its partners, to co-manage directly with civil society, which has become a partner legitimized from outside, notably by

²⁷B. CAMPBELL, 1996, adopting a critical stance, already noted that far from being politically neutral and playing a role of technical efficiency as suggested, these (so-called austerity) programs are known to direct state interventions in such a way as to neglect certain development strategies. More specifically, it is those strategies that are not export-oriented and those that favor reforms that are called into question by the process of adjustment and de-statization. Read B. CAMPBELL, 1996, "Débats actuels sur la reconceptualisation de l'État par les organismes de financements multilatéraux de l'USAID", in *Politique africaine*, pp. 18-28.

²⁸ I. SERAGELDIN, 1990, *Governance, democracy and world bank in Africa*, World Bank.

²⁹ World Bank, *The long time perspective study*. This study is part of a series of studies published in 1981 and 1984 respectively: *Accelerated Development in Sub-saharan Africa; Toward sustained Development in Sub-saharan Africa*.

³⁰ According to sociologist Abdoulaye NIANG, 2005, transparency is the operational process which, on a logical, technical and regulatory basis, prepares and accompanies an action aimed at a given end, the results of each stage of which can be the subject of a conclusive public evaluation, which must take place without hindrance. It is the only guarantee of results in line with the expectations of the terms of reference that define the action or activity, and constitutes a guarantee of compliant results. Abdoulaye NIANG, 2005, "Transparence, gouvernance et développement local : enjeux et acteurs de la décentralisation", in Jacques Habib SY (Dir.), *Op. cit*, Aide Transparence, pp. 83-156.

³¹World Bank, 1992, *Op. cit*, World Bank Publication, Washington D.C., p.1.

³²These include the form of a political regime (I), the processes by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources (II), a government's ability to design, formulate and implement policies, and the general way in which government functions are carried out (III).

³³ M.DIA, 1993, "Pour une meilleure gouvernance comme fondement de la réforme de la fonction publique en Afrique au sud du Sahara", in *World Bank Technical Paper* no. 225F, Africa Technical Department Series, World Bank, Washington, pp. 1-32.

international financial institutions and partner countries. The aim of this legitimization of civil society is to reduce the prerogatives of the State, in order to achieve greater involvement of the population in the definition and implementation of public policies. In many countries, this has led to the implementation of anti-poverty programs initiated by development agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which have required governments to consult civil society when drawing up poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) using a participatory process³⁴. In such a governance framework, the management of public affairs is now promoted within a multi-actor framework, for greater credibility of the public sphere vis-à-vis its international partners and greater legitimacy of programs drawn up internally. With this heterogeneous configuration (State, civil society), governance becomes both a space for competition and confrontation.

On the one hand, this challenge to the traditional role of the state in the new governance paradigm is not well received by most state actors. For some representatives of Southern states, the promotion of good governance, far from strengthening the role of the state, would on the contrary have as its main consequence the progressive dismantling of state structures in favor of other actors.

On the other hand, for many civil society organizations that see themselves as the ardent defenders of the aspirations of citizens and disadvantaged groups, the use of governance means an improvement in their own positions within the arena, in the face of a state that must now share resources and skills³⁵. According to these same civil society organizations, the use of governance should also enable local non-state actors to position themselves favorably in the international arena vis-à-vis international financing institutions.

Indeed, with this new impetus given to the notion of governance, each group of players, according to its own self-definition, will seek to improve its position in the arena and will tend to challenge the role of its potential competitor. Thus, for example, to attract international aid, the notion of good governance is invoked by actors (states, civil society organizations, non-governmental bodies, etc.) to legitimize their actions, improve their operations and strengthen their capacities, however dubious they may be.

³⁴ This so-called participatory approach, which led to the creation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), has been called into question by certain authors claiming to be from civil society. These works are collected in *Pauvreté et hégémonismes; les sociétés civiles africaines face aux ajustements structurels de type nouveau*, ONG Aide Transparence, edited by Jacques Habib SY, 2002. Let's just remember that the objective of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund was to achieve the international development goals of halving poverty by 2015. The mid-term assessment is more than mixed, and the results obtained through poverty reduction strategies have been very disappointing.

³⁵ See Maxime MONTAGNER, 2006, "Les Organisations de la Société Civile et les débats sur la gouvernance : Réappropriation et revendications: comment renforcer sa position dans l'arène politique?", *Journées Européennes du Développement*.

There is a sort of promotion and appropriation of the concept for strategic purposes³⁶.

Ultimately, the governance craze involves three major changes³⁷ in development approaches: a probable or possible shift in the emergence of development dynamics from central to local levels; the empowerment of a plurality of development players, old and new, private, public, and associative; and a re-legitimation of the role of public policy in development processes.

4. The ambiguities of good governance or the mirages of North/South cooperation

Over the past two decades, the concept of good governance has become a leitmotif on the international political agenda. Since its public emergence, the concept has become central to most international cooperation programs. Today, this notion is used by most development players (donors, UN agencies, cooperation agencies, the European Union, etc.) and civil society players (non-governmental organizations), who have incorporated it into their institutional agendas. As a result of its widespread use within most national and international bodies, this concept has opened the way to a number of possible interpretations. While it was the World Bank that first promoted the notion, approaching it from a technical and economic perspective, other institutions have subsequently integrated it into the heart of their cooperation and intervention programs. The history of bilateral and multilateral cooperation teaches us that the experts and technicians of international development aid institutions are not always unanimous in their assessment of the content to be given to institutional reform (*capacity building*) or the reconceptualization of the state.

This is the case, for example, with CIDA (the Canadian International Development Agency), which, in contrast to the World Bank, is more interested in how the partner state carries out its functions than in proposing changes to its role, as the main international financial institutions do. In this sense, CIDA³⁸ articulates this notion around three inseparable components:

³⁶ L. THEVENOT, 1989, "Équilibre et rationalité dans un univers complexe", in Jean-Pierre DUPUY et al, *L'économie des conventions*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des Sciences Politiques, pp. 147-198.

³⁷J. COUSSY, 2002, "Les politiques publiques dans la mondialisation", paper presented at the VII Congress of the French Political Science Association, Lille. For further reading, see P. LE GALES, 1995, "Du gouvernement des villes à la gouvernance urbaine", in *Revue française de science politique*, vol. XLV, n°1, pp. 51-77; P. SADLAN, 1992, "La démocratie locale à l'âge du village planétaire", in CROZIER M. ET TROSA, S. (Dir.), *La décentralisation, réforme de l'État*, Boulogne-Billancourt, Pouvoirs Locaux, pp. 55-58; G. GONTCHAROFF, 1991, "Démocratie, citoyenneté dans la décentralisation. État des lieux de la citoyenneté locale : décentralisation et participation", in *Territoires*, n° 321, Paris, October, pp. 8-14.

³⁸CANADA, 1993, *Good Governance: Canadian Values and Interests in Changing World*, Ottawa, Department of External Affairs p. 5. This structure now makes increasing use of the concept of democratic governance. On this subject, see also Myriam GERVAIS, 1993, "Le Canada et l'Afrique: de la redistribution internationaliste à la conditionnalité politique (1960-1992)", in A.-P. DONNEUR and P. SOLDATOS (Dir.), *Le Canada à l'ère de l'après-guerre froide et des blocs régionaux*, Toronto, Captus Press, pp.103-133.

- Respect for human rights and democracy;
- Strengthening civil society ;
- Good government and efficiency.

Other international institutions, such as the United Nations Development Program³⁹ and the Ford Foundation, for example, see governance in its purely democratic and participatory dimensions. According to these organizations, effective government depends on the legitimacy of broad-based participation, equity, and accountability. In line with these orientations, the Ford Foundation went so far as to withdraw its aid to governments in support of non-governmental organizations, which it saw as instruments of citizen participation and service delivery.

As we can see, the definitions of good governance and the angles from which it has been approached are many and varied, but one thing is clear: they all share a common assumption. In this respect, the most widely recognized idea today, shared by most international institutions and development aid organizations, is that governance is a solution that can improve both the impact of public development policies and the economic, social, political, and environmental situation of countries in the South. But beyond the rhetoric (elegance for some, of the term "good governance") and the ethics (for others, "good governance" poses a question of morality), we need to question the way in which the Bretton Woods institutions and those of the European Union, which are today the main partners of the countries of the South and the main frameworks in which power relationships and influence are played out on the international scene, and in which development aid and anti-poverty policies are put in place. These countries shape and implement their own approaches to good governance, and above all, how they condition their aid allocations vis-à-vis recipient societies. In the European approach to the notion of good governance, this concept encompasses *"both a question of the real mobilization, representation and empowerment of civil society, and in particular of the poor and a question of the real capacity of public institutions and administrations to define and propose the required policies"*⁴⁰.

Specifically, good governance is seen as :

"A process of long-term change, based on universal objectives, principles, and shared aspirations, which must be applied to the major regalian functions of the State, as well as in the interactions between public institutions and citizens. Democratic governance emphasizes the affirmation of the rights of all citizens, men and women alike,

³⁹ For elements of the United Nations Development Program's approach to governance, see Nsongurlua NTALAJA, 2003, *Gouvernance et développement*, FAFO, Oslo.

⁴⁰ European Commission, *Governance and Development*, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee, COM(2003)615 Final, 20/10/2003, Brussels.

*and cannot, therefore, be reduced solely to the fight against corruption"*⁴¹.

From this perspective, governance appears to be a means of initiating internal political reforms in partner countries. It is a prerequisite for the effectiveness of donor policies and programs. Indeed, according to the European Commission, the quantitative increase in aid to developing countries will have no significant impact unless these countries make real efforts to improve the quality of their state structures. In other words, the countries of the South need to work hard to improve their legitimacy and their ability to meet the basic needs of their populations. The internal reforms they must undertake will contribute above all to *"ensuring a positive and lasting impact of development aid and international cooperation"*⁴².

According to the European Commission, governance implies greater transparency, greater guarantees, and greater efficiency in the management of development aid. By strengthening its managerial capacities, this option helps Southern states to open up more fully to the private sector and civil society, which must engage in economic and social activities alongside them. In a document on aid effectiveness, Louis Michel reminds us that this effectiveness :

*"This implies countries that function effectively, transparently, and equally for all. It is essentially the combination of transparent and accountable institutions, with solid skills and competencies, and a fundamental willingness to do what is right. This is what enables a state to effectively discharge its duty of service to its citizens"*⁴³.

The Bretton Woods institutions have approached the notion of good governance from virtually the same angle. Indeed, in recent years, they have made a historic shift, openly asserting their political role vis-à-vis their partners in the South, who are required to implement internal political reforms in order to benefit from aid allocations. And yet, at the outset, these international institutions were only concerned with the economic and social organization of their partner countries, as confirmed by a speech given by the former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Michel Camdessus, in Hong Kong on November 27, 1989: *"The Fund provides assistance to all countries whose authorities are striving to radically transform their economies and, indeed, their societies, and which are facing transitional problems"*⁴⁴.

⁴¹ European Commission, *Governance in the European Consensus on Development*, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM (2006) 421 Final, 30/08/2006, Brussels.

⁴² European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM (2006a) 421 Final, 30/08/2006, Brussels.

⁴³ European Commission, *Compendium of development cooperation strategies*, DE 133, Luxembourg, October 2006b.

⁴⁴ This was practically the same argument made a few months later, about Latin America (March 2, 1990) and Africa (March 26, 1990).

Nevertheless, over the years, the principle of aid conditionality has evolved considerably, moving from the economic to the political. In April 1992, three years after the Hong Kong speech, Michel Camdessus did not hesitate to speak openly of democracy as a condition for the allocation of aid, a system he considered "*best suited to the market economy and most likely to facilitate structural adjustment*"⁴⁵.

Paradoxically, this same approach can be found at the level of the World Bank, which, in its 1997 World Development Report (entitled *The State in a Developing World*), began to take a particular interest in the political sphere of partner states, and in particular in the forms of their political systems (whether parliamentary or presidential, military or civilian, authoritarian or democratic). The form of a political regime is now considered by the World Bank to be a fundamental dimension of the notion of governance. This dimension was theorized by The Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, from which the Bank borrowed the definition of governance in its reference report on this concept. This form of political regime, which is increasingly emphasized by the World Bank these days, complements the two other dimensions of governance on which the World Bank has been focusing until now. These are, firstly, the processes through which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources and, secondly, the capacity of governments to design, formulate and execute policies and, in general, to perform their functions. The above-mentioned report marks the beginning of a radical change in the way this institution perceives its role in development cooperation. With these institutional innovations in the name of efficiency and competition, there is now a considerable emphasis on the political dimension. As Thibault Le TEXIER points out⁴⁶, the World Bank went so far as to recommend certain types of government in 1999.

This turning point culminated in the implementation of 300 governance indicators drawn up by three economists from the same institution. These 300 governance indicators have been grouped into six main categories⁴⁷ so as to enable the World Bank to classify countries according to the various governance criteria it has established itself. This is the procedure followed by the World Bank when granting loans, in addition to its political rating grid, the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), which is

based on 20 criteria grouped into four categories⁴⁸, enabling the institution to measure the "political performance" of its debtors, and incidentally to establish the ideal-typical governance model of its conception of the notion. In the view of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Union, liberal democracy (rule of law, free elections, political pluralism, etc.) is supposed to contribute to the success of economic reforms in developing countries. The political dimension of good governance takes on a prescriptive aspect, based on the fact that partner countries must demonstrate efficient and transparent political and economic management, both before and after receiving aid. The aim is twofold: to challenge the interventionist model of development that has prevailed in sub-Saharan Africa, and to restructure the state economically in line with the free-market model.

As mentioned above, the World Bank's perspective is rooted in corporate principles, where efficiency and competition are the main axes around which good governance is built. *Roughly speaking, it is on the basis of these business principles that it has reoriented and implicitly redefined its philosophy of political governance, where the keywords are: respect for public freedoms, democracy, fundamental human rights, citizen security, general interest, individual freedom, development of a respected executive, legislative and judicial framework, etc.* These concerns remain constantly present today. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund continue to address these concerns.

But beyond the effects of fashion, there are doubts about the way in which official development assistance is conditioned. Without wishing to prejudge the usefulness or otherwise, or the relevance or otherwise, of applying the principles of good governance in the societies of the South, we feel it appropriate to question the neutrality of this concept. Indeed, if we take an in-depth look at the North/South cooperation system, we find that good governance is seen by aid structures (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, European Union) as a panacea that Third World countries must now follow to gain access to bank loans and capital inflows, in order to be able to finance the investments they need for their development.

This approach is based on the implicit ideology that there is only one political (market democracy) and economic (market economy) model that is valid and relevant for the whole of humanity. In the name of the criteria of "political efficiency" and "capacity for reform" introduced, international financial institutions and aid agencies are thus seeking, under the guise of aid conditionality, to reshape the political and institutional spaces of Southern states, according to a European-centric vision of how the state should function. Although the democratic ideal is an aspiration of all peoples, and although freedom is a universally shared principle, it has to be said that this way of seeing and understanding governance is ideologically, politically, and culturally marked. It is essentially rooted in Western mentality and thought. It is, in fact, Western-centric. To accept and support such a hypothesis is to

⁴⁵ The political nature of the principle of aid conditionality can be seen in the fact that many countries and regions (USA, Canada, Germany, UK, Belgium, European Union) have openly expressed their interest in the progress made by states towards democracy through enhanced cooperation. See especially Manuel TOROTRA, 1992, "Governance: a new dimension of international financial cooperation", *Le trimestre du Monde*, 1^{er} trimestre, p. 105.

⁴⁶ On this subject, read Thibault LE TEXIER, 2006, "Quand la Banque mondiale entre en politique. Outils et incidences d'une action politique déguisée", Institute for Research and Debate on Governance, <http://www.institut-gouvernance.org/spip.php?lang=fr>. Last consulted May 2007.

⁴⁷ These include the power of influence and accountability, political instability and violence, the effectiveness of public authorities, the weight of regulation, the rule of law and the fight against corruption.

⁴⁸ These include economic management, structural policies, social policies, institutions and public service management.

ignore the idea that there are no universals and that realities are multiple. It means refusing to believe that each social universe, each partner country, has its own history, its own specificities, its own models of thought and organization. To seek to impose a Western-style political organization on a global scale is also to ignore the specific socio-cultural values of partner societies, and above all to lose sight of the historical context⁴⁹ in which liberal democracy emerged.

Basically, we agree with Sophia MAPPA⁵⁰ in asking whether there is a historical law that dictates the identical repetition of the Western trajectory in every society on the planet. Is the Western individual, and hence the Western model of governance and development, the necessary outcome of human evolution? In the current conditions of partnership and aid allocation, everything seems to indicate that international financial institutions are more like instruments of domination set up to extend the sphere of influence of Western societies over others and to insert them, without saying so, into this globalized socio-economic system in which they will have no say. The concerns expressed by Marie-Claude SMOUTS remain fully relevant:

"In the absence of a central organization, of a global frame of reference, the only regulator acting on a planetary scale and traversing all interacting social subsystems can today only be the market. Beneath its idealistic and utopian

⁴⁹As mentioned above, liberal democracy was born in Western Europe in the context of a socio-political historicity specific to these societies. According to Francis AKINDES [Les mirages de la démocratie en Afrique subsaharienne francophone, Dakar, Paris, CODESRIA, Karthala, 1996, p. 184 et seq.], in these societies, on "the search for a *modus vivendi* between, on the one hand, the emergence of a society that would not crush the individual and, on the other, the creation of a space of freedom for the individual-citizen; in return, he must be respectful of the social contract in force. If we are to believe Francis AKINDES, following in the footsteps of ROSSANVALLON (1992) and TOURAINE (1992), the trajectory of democracy in Western Europe is essentially the story of the reinforcement of its autonomy in a subtle interplay between the affirmation of the subject (I and not me) and the recognition of the other as subject. At the heart of the democratic spirit lies the individual, from whom everything starts and to whom everything returns. The democratic spirit is a cult of reason in history, and is the very foundation of socialization in general, and political socialization in particular. In the case of France, for example, these factors range from the combination of the concept of imperium inherited from Roman law and the models of kingdoms provided by canon law between the 10th and 13th centuries, to the ideas of contemporary thinkers, including the Wars of Religion, a key phase in the politicization process, and the prodigious achievements of Galileo, Grotius, Descartes, Port Royal, Malbranche, Hobbes, Newton, Spinoza, Leibniz and others in the mathematization of God and the universe he created., in the 17th century, the ideas of the Enlightenment in the 18th century and the socio-political upheavals that followed. This spirit and these institutions (political pluralism, separation of powers, freedom of expression) have thus been imprinted over time in the collective values and ideas transmitted through education to generate the democratic habitus, i.e. a system of dispositions to democratic practice". As we can see from the above, liberal democracy, whose fundamental principles form the basis of the ideals of good democratic governance that international financial institutions are imposing on the countries of the South, is rooted in the historicity of Western societies.

⁵⁰S. MAPPA, 2004, "Le politique à l'heure de la mondialisation", in *Les métamorphoses du politique au Nord et au Sud*, Sous La Direction de S. MAPPA, Paris, Karthala, pp.08-36.

allure, governance could well conceal the most devious of liberalisms"⁵¹.

We often tend to forget that the main underwriters of these financial institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund) remain the Western countries themselves (Germany, the United States, Switzerland, the central banks of a hundred or so countries, etc.) which, in return for the credits they provide, prescribe and imprint on recipient countries and on the international arena, their visions of the world, the economy, and politics. Many donor countries make compliance with the conditionalities defined by the Bretton Woods institutions a prerequisite for the disbursement of a decisive proportion of their development aid. A case in point is Niger, which a few years ago saw its usual sources of funding blocked by a disagreement between the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Indeed, in 1991, the World Bank suspended all structural adjustment financing to Niger, judging that the country's political will to implement reforms was insufficient. In many ways, this approach reflects the reality of political and economic interference in the North/South cooperation system. Susan GEORGE and Fabrizio SABELLI see "good governance" and the aid that goes with it as an attack on the last bastion of state independence. This is how they put it:

*"The effect and intention of structural adjustment has been to weaken the state and ensure that many of its traditional functions are taken over by external forces acting in the name of the global market (...). The next logical step is now to substitute supranational power for national authority under the banner of governance"*⁵².

For us, these imposed injunctions are more a part of an ideology, implicit or otherwise, of accompaniment — in societies which nevertheless present socio-historical and cultural configurations quite different from those of the West— of liberalism, market democracy, and globalization⁵³ whose result is to prevent reflection

⁵¹M.-C. SMOUTS, 1998, "Du bon usage de la gouvernance en relations internationales", *Revue Internationale des Sciences Sociales*, March. Cf. also A. KAZANCIGIL, 2005, "La gouvernance et la souveraineté de l'État", in G. HERMET, A. KAZANCIGIL and J-F. PRUD'HOMME (Dir.), *La gouvernance. Un concept et ses applications*, Paris, Karthala, pp. 49-64.

⁵²S. GEORGE and F. SABELLI, 1994, *Crédits sans frontières. La religion séculière de la Banque mondiale*, Paris, La Découverte, p. 183

⁵³When the concept of governance first emerged on the international political scene, civil society organizations were unequivocal in their assessments. The irruption of this concept on the international scene followed the painful implementation of structural adjustment programs, set up by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and which, despite giving rise to hopes of better economic and financial performance in almost all the countries where they were implemented, ended in mixed results. Under the guise of promoting good governance, these institutions subsequently initiated poverty reduction programs in most African countries. Alas, the results have not lived up to expectations either, so much so that many non-governmental organizations consider that the promotion of "good governance" reflects a hidden desire on the part of international financial institutions to initiate and accelerate privatization and deregulation processes in developing countries. However, these concerns are not false in themselves, given that economic neo-liberalism has almost become a dogma within the international financial institutions, which today encourage the withdrawal of the state, private initiative, competitiveness

on the mechanisms of political domination⁵⁴. Rather than playing their classic role as allocators of funds and contributing to the solution of the socio-economic problems of its member countries (such was their birth object), the international financial institutions today seem to benefit more from the indebtedness of most countries of the South — with whom, however, they previously initiated economic programs that turned to failure, — to give themselves the role of political policeman and further instrumentalize them.

However, the correlation they have established between political regime, good democratic governance, and the process of economic development is not always obvious, even though sustainable economic growth requires a stable political regime. Historically, countries such as South Korea, Singapore, and, more recently, the People's Republic of China, have experienced growing economic prosperity, even in periods of poor democratic governance. The central question we are entitled to ask ourselves today is: what is the existing legal framework that authorizes and legitimizes the Bretton Woods institutions to impose this or that regime on partner states?

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), now known as the World Bank⁵⁵, was conceived in 1944 in Bretton Woods in the United States, to lend capital to European countries emerging from the Second World War for their reconstruction. Since then, it has devoted itself to promoting the economic development of member countries, particularly developing countries, through financial and technical assistance. Under the Bank's Articles of Association, loans must be granted to governments (or to organizations that have received their guarantee) to finance productive projects designed to stimulate growth. Its statutes also stipulate that loans must be granted on the basis of purely economic considerations⁵⁶ and that the political nature of the regime must not be taken into account. By imposing democratic injunctions on recipient countries⁵⁷, this institution has,

and free competition. In this new international economic order, man is no longer at the heart of development.

⁵⁴ This is the same sentiment expressed by M. HAUBERT with regard to civil society. See M. HAUBERT, 2000, "L'idéologie de la société civile", in M. HAUBERT and P.-P. REY, *Les sociétés civiles face au marché. Le changement social dans le monde postcolonial*, Paris, Karthala.

⁵⁵ Officially, the name "World Bank" does not exist. The term is used to designate "The World Bank Group". This group includes the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), the International Finance Corporation, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

⁵⁶ Virtually the same approach can be found in the founding statutes of the IMF, also created by the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944. At the outset, the IMF's role was that of a guardian of the system of fixed parities and loans from deposits in the various currencies. The IMF's financial role subsequently expanded considerably, but its assistance was conditional on the adoption of economic policy measures.

⁵⁷ If democracy is to be sustainable and stable, it cannot, as we have already stressed, be imposed from the outside. It is above all a process from within, by and for the people. Jack STRAW, the British Foreign Secretary, has written very aptly on this point: while everyone aspires to democracy, it can "only be fully realized under certain fundamental conditions. It is not the work of governments alone, but above all that of the people". To achieve this, we need to support "civil society, politicians, parties and the media" in order to "listen to the needs and aspirations of governments and peoples".

in our view, departed from the economic principles on which it was founded until now, and which legitimized its actions in the sphere of international cooperation. By continuing to directly prescribe its ideal-typical model of governance to be implemented by partner countries, it is in the process of abusing its original statutes as a bank for economic and social development, which explicitly prohibit it from having any political mandate whatsoever. These are just a few of the many changes made to the organization's internal structure in order to impose itself internationally and interfere in the internal affairs of third countries, subjecting them to its own rules of the game.

Already, this attempt to impose Western governance on aid-recipient societies has been pilloried by most partner states. Indeed, at the 2006 European Development Days held in Brussels, several African heads of state⁵⁸ criticized this approach. Paul KAGAME, President of the Republic of Rwanda, recalled: "*Governance takes different forms in each country since each country has its own model of governance, its own criteria for good governance*". Similarly, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles ZENAWI sounded the alarm, noting openly that "*democracy cannot be imposed from outside*", while President MOGAE of Botswana warned: "*Don't abuse your affluence and our poverty to impose yourselves*".

Despite the dominant discourse on the proclaimed virtues of the principles of "good governance", contradictions and ambiguities characterize the international financial institutions' approach to this notion. In fact, we may well wonder whether the same criteria imposed on the countries of the South are applied to all Western countries and within these international financial institutions themselves. We recall that the World Bank saw its resigning President, Paul WOLFOVITZ, caught up in a nepotism scandal (i.e., asking for the promotion of his girlfriend, also employed by the World Bank). In 2008, Dominique STRAUSS-KAHN, Director of the International Monetary Fund, was similarly criticized (nepotism case involving favoritism towards a subordinate) but was reappointed to the same position.

This turning point culminated in the implementation of 300 governance indicators drawn up by three economists from the same institution. These 300 governance indicators have been grouped into six main categories⁵⁹ so as to enable the World Bank to classify countries according to the various governance criteria it has established itself. This is the procedure followed by the World Bank when granting loans, in addition to its political rating grid, the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), which is based on 20 criteria grouped into four categories⁶⁰, enabling the

Jack STRAW, 2005, *N'essayons pas d'imposer un modèle de démocratie*, Le Monde, March 16. On the economic inefficiency of democratic reforms aimed at developing countries, see the work of the Delphi Forum, in particular Sophia MAPPA (Dir.), 1995, *Développer par la démocratie? Injonctions occidentales et exigences planétaires*, Paris, Karthala.

⁵⁸ Speech by African heads of state and government at the European Development Days on November 17, 2006.

⁵⁹ These include the power of influence and accountability, political instability and violence, the effectiveness of public authorities, the weight of regulation, the rule of law and the fight against corruption.

⁶⁰ These include economic management, structural policies, social policies, institutions and public service management.

institution to measure the "political performance" of its debtors, and incidentally to establish the ideal-typical governance model of its conception of the notion. In the view of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Union, liberal democracy (rule of law, free elections, political pluralism, etc.) is supposed to contribute to the success of economic reforms in developing countries. The political dimension of good governance takes on a prescriptive aspect, based on the fact that partner countries must demonstrate efficient and transparent political and economic management, both before and after receiving aid. The aim is twofold: to challenge the interventionist model of development that has prevailed in sub-Saharan Africa, and to restructure the state economically in line with the free-market model.

As mentioned above, the World Bank's perspective is rooted in corporate principles, where efficiency and competition are the main axes around which good governance is built. *Roughly speaking, it is on the basis of these business principles that it has reoriented and implicitly redefined its philosophy of political governance, where the keywords are: respect for public freedoms, democracy, fundamental human rights, citizen security, general interest, individual freedom, development of a respected executive, legislative and judicial framework, etc.* These concerns remain constantly present today. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund continue to address these concerns.

But beyond the effects of fashion, there are doubts about the way in which official development assistance is conditioned. Without wishing to prejudge the usefulness or otherwise, or the relevance or otherwise, of applying the principles of good governance in the societies of the South, we feel it appropriate to question the neutrality of this concept. Indeed, if we take an in-depth look at the North/South cooperation system, we find that good governance is seen by aid structures (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, European Union) as a panacea that Third World countries must now follow to gain access to bank loans and capital inflows, in order to be able to finance the investments they need for their development.

This approach is based on the implicit ideology that there is only one political (market democracy) and economic (market economy) model that is valid and relevant for the whole of humanity. In the name of the criteria of "political efficiency" and "capacity for reform" introduced, international financial institutions and aid agencies are thus seeking, under the guise of aid conditionality, to reshape the political and institutional spaces of Southern states, according to a European-centric vision of how the state should function. Although the democratic ideal is an aspiration of all peoples, and although freedom is a universally shared principle, it has to be said that this way of seeing and understanding governance is ideologically, politically, and culturally marked. It is essentially rooted in Western mentality and thought. It is, in fact, Western-centric. To accept and support such a hypothesis is to ignore the idea that there are no universals and that realities are multiple. It means refusing to believe that each social universe, each partner country, has its own history, its own specificities, its own models of thought and organization. To seek to impose a

Western-style political organization on a global scale is also to ignore the specific socio-cultural values of partner societies, and above all to lose sight of the historical context⁶¹ in which liberal democracy emerged.

Basically, we agree with Sophia MAPPA⁶² in asking whether there is a historical law that dictates the identical repetition of the Western trajectory in every society on the planet? Is the Western individual, and hence the Western model of governance and development, the necessary outcome of human evolution? In the current conditions of partnership and aid allocation, everything seems to indicate that international financial institutions are more like instruments of domination set up to extend the sphere of influence of Western societies over others and to insert them, without saying so, into this globalized socio-economic system in which they will have no say. The concerns expressed by Marie-Claude SMOUTS remain fully relevant:

"In the absence of a central organization, of a global frame of reference, the only regulator acting on a planetary scale and traversing all interacting social subsystems can today only be the market. Beneath its idealistic and utopian allure, governance could well conceal the most devious of liberalisms"⁶³.

⁶¹As mentioned above, liberal democracy was born in Western Europe in the context of a socio-political historicity specific to these societies. According to Francis AKINDES [*Les mirages de la démocratie en Afrique subsaharienne francophone*, Dakar, Paris, CODESRIA, Karthala, 1996, p. 184 et seq.], in these societies, on "the search for a *modus vivendi* between, on the one hand, the emergence of a society that would not crush the individual and, on the other, the creation of a space of freedom for the individual-citizen; in return, he must be respectful of the social contract in force. If we are to believe Francis AKINDES, following in the footsteps of ROSSANVALLON (1992) and TOURAINE (1992), the trajectory of democracy in Western Europe is essentially the story of the reinforcement of its autonomy in a subtle interplay between the affirmation of the subject (I and not me) and the recognition of the other as subject. At the heart of the democratic spirit lies the individual, from whom everything starts and to whom everything returns. The democratic spirit is a cult of reason in history, and is the very foundation of socialization in general, and political socialization in particular. In the case of France, for example, these factors range from the combination of the concept of imperium inherited from Roman law and the models of kingdoms provided by canon law between the 10th and 13th centuries, to the ideas of contemporary thinkers, including the Wars of Religion, a key phase in the politicization process, and the prodigious achievements of Galileo, Grotius, Descartes, Port Royal, Malbranche, Hobbes, Newton, Spinoza, Leibniz and others in the mathematization of God and the universe he created., in the 17th century, the ideas of the Enlightenment in the 18th century and the socio-political upheavals that followed. This spirit and these institutions (political pluralism, separation of powers, freedom of expression) have thus been imprinted over time in the collective values and ideas transmitted through education to generate the democratic habitus, i.e. a system of dispositions to democratic practice". As we can see from the above, liberal democracy, whose fundamental principles form the basis of the ideals of good democratic governance that international financial institutions are imposing on the countries of the South, is rooted in the historicity of Western societies.

⁶²S. MAPPA, 2004, "Le politique à l'heure de la mondialisation", in *Les métamorphoses du politique au Nord et au Sud*, Sous La Direction de S. MAPPA, Paris, Karthala, pp.08-36.

⁶³M.-C. SMOUTS, 1998, "Du bon usage de la gouvernance en relations internationales", *Revue Internationale des Sciences Sociales*, March. Cf.

We often tend to forget that the main underwriters of these financial institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund) remain the Western countries themselves (Germany, the United States, Switzerland, the central banks of a hundred or so countries, etc.) which, in return for the credits they provide, prescribe and imprint on recipient countries and on the international arena, their visions of the world, the economy, and politics. Many donor countries make compliance with the conditionalities defined by the Bretton Woods institutions a prerequisite for the disbursement of a decisive proportion of their development aid. A case in point is Niger, which a few years ago saw its usual sources of funding blocked by a disagreement between the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Indeed, in 1991, the World Bank suspended all structural adjustment financing to Niger, judging that the country's political will to implement reforms was insufficient. In many ways, this approach reflects the reality of political and economic interference in the North/South cooperation system. Susan GEORGE and Fabrizio SABELLI see "good governance" and the aid that goes with it as an attack on the last bastion of state independence. This is how they put it:

*"The effect and intention of structural adjustment has been to weaken the state and ensure that many of its traditional functions are taken over by external forces acting in the name of the global market (...). The next logical step is now to substitute supranational power for national authority under the banner of governance"*⁶⁴.

For us, these imposed injunctions are more a part of an ideology, implicit or otherwise, of accompaniment — in societies which nevertheless present socio-historical and cultural configurations quite different from those of the West— of liberalism, market democracy, and globalization⁶⁵ whose result is to prevent reflection

also A. KAZANCIGIL, 2005, "La gouvernance et la souveraineté de l'État", in G. HERMET, A. KAZANCIGIL and J-F. PRUD'HOMME (Dir.), *La gouvernance. Un concept et ses applications*, Paris, Karthala, pp. 49-64.

⁶⁴ S. GEORGE and F. SABELLI, 1994, *Crédits sans frontières. La religion séculière de la Banque mondiale*, Paris, La Découverte, p. 183

⁶⁵When the concept of governance first emerged on the international political scene, civil society organizations were unequivocal in their assessments. The irruption of this concept on the international scene followed the painful implementation of structural adjustment programs, set up by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and which, despite giving rise to hopes of better economic and financial performance in almost all the countries where they were implemented, ended in mixed results. Under the guise of promoting good governance, these institutions subsequently initiated poverty reduction programs in most African countries. Alas, the results have not lived up to expectations either, so much so that many non-governmental organizations consider that the promotion of "good governance" reflects a hidden desire on the part of international financial institutions to initiate and accelerate privatization and deregulation processes in developing countries. However, these concerns are not false in themselves, given that economic neo-liberalism has almost become a dogma within the international financial institutions, which today encourage the withdrawal of the state, private initiative, competitiveness and free competition. In this new international economic order, man is no longer at the heart of development.

on the mechanisms of political domination⁶⁶. Rather than playing their classic role as allocators of funds and contributing to the solution of the socio-economic problems of its member countries (such was their birth object), the international financial institutions today seem to benefit more from the indebtedness of most countries of the South — with whom, however, they previously initiated economic programs that turned to failure, — to give themselves the role of political policeman and further instrumentalize them.

However, the correlation they have established between political regime, good democratic governance, and the process of economic development is not always obvious, even though sustainable economic growth requires a stable political regime. Historically, countries such as South Korea, Singapore, and, more recently, the People's Republic of China, have experienced growing economic prosperity, even in periods of poor democratic governance. The central question we are entitled to ask ourselves today is: what is the existing legal framework that authorizes and legitimizes the Bretton Woods institutions to impose this or that regime on partner states?

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), now known as the World Bank⁶⁷, was conceived in 1944 in Bretton Woods in the United States, to lend capital to European countries emerging from the Second World War for their reconstruction. Since then, it has devoted itself to promoting the economic development of member countries, particularly developing countries, through financial and technical assistance. Under the Bank's Articles of Association, loans must be granted to governments (or to organizations that have received their guarantee) to finance productive projects designed to stimulate growth. Its statutes also stipulate that loans must be granted on the basis of purely economic considerations⁶⁸ and that the political nature of the regime must not be taken into account. By imposing democratic injunctions on recipient countries⁶⁹, this institution has,

⁶⁶ This is the same sentiment expressed by M. HAUBERT with regard to civil society. See M. HAUBERT, 2000, "L'idéologie de la société civile", in M. HAUBERT and P.-P. REY, *Les sociétés civiles face au marché. Le changement social dans le monde postcolonial*, Paris, Karthala.

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In other words, should this moral and ethical approach to good governance be spared in societies reputed to be the most democratic⁷¹ where corruption, nepotism and clientelism in the

order to "listen to the needs and aspirations of governments and peoples". Jack STRAW, 2005, *N'essayons pas d'imposer un modèle de démocratie*, Le Monde, March 16. On the economic inefficiency of democratic reforms aimed at developing countries, see the work of the Delphi Forum, in particular Sophia MAPPA (Dir.), 1995, *Développer par la démocratie? Injonctions occidentales et exigences planétaires*, Paris, Karthala.

⁷⁰ Speech by African heads of state and government at the European Development Days on November 17, 2006.

⁷¹ The democratic reputation of Western societies can be questioned if we bear in mind that democracy manifests itself within this same space, as elsewhere, with ups and downs, with advances and setbacks. In this respect, the history of the construction of the European Union is evocative of the crisis of democracy by the people and for the people. Many specialists, such as Marie-France Verdier, 2007, "La démocratie sans et contre le peuple. De ses dérivés", in J. Du B. DE GAUDUSSON et al. (Dir.), *Mélanges en l'honneur de Slobodan Milacic : démocratie et liberté : tension, dialogue, confrontation*, Brussels, Bruylant, 1 vol, XXVII, 1148 p., quoted by Benoît SADRY, *Op. cit.*, 2007, p. 26 et seq. have criticized

broadest sense of the term are rife in public structures? Should such an ethical approach continue to ignore the social inequalities that are growing in these same countries of the North, where many millions of men and women are today becoming third-world citizens on the altar of the dictatorship of capital and money, which are now the only values that count in these times of globalization?

In our view, these are the limits of the Western approach to good governance, which loses all symbolic weight when it comes to issues as important as social justice, economic democracy, social democracy and so on. Returning to the criteria imposed on countries in the South, Thibault Le TEXIER suggests that there is a double standard here, with countries in the South being subject to governance constraints that neither states nor companies in the North are bound to respect. Susan GEORGE and Fabrizio SABELLI point out, from the same angle of analysis, that the World Bank advocating these rules has not always respected them in the field, and is often criticized for its lack of transparency and internal democracy. More than ever, we need to get rid of the illusion that corruption is a "cultural problem". According to this internationally propagated illusion, Africa and the countries of the South are more prone to corruption than the nations of the North, due to "alleged cultural characteristics". Fortunately, mentalities have evolved to deconstruct these stereotypes. In this respect, the conclusions of Transparency International's report by Dr Peter EIGGEN (1996) are very interesting:

"Although individual societies may set the limits of acceptable conduct, there is no country in the world where the illicit enrichment of those with public power by business partners, at the expense of the vital interests of the population, is taken for granted. In such a system, the corruptor is as guilty as the corrupted".

In the final analysis, the development cooperation system deserves to be revisited by breaking with the logic that currently dominates

this European version *"of the democratic empire [which] stands out for the radical way in which it detaches democracy from any real people, and [which] constructs a kratos without a demos. What now holds the kratos is, in short, the idea of democracy"*. The worst affront to democracy at European level has been the failure to consult the people when ratifying important treaties. But the worst has also been to reject, in the words of Marie-France VERDIER, *"its votes as null and void, when they do not conform to the 'eurocratic' ideal"*. Indeed, the introduction of a new draft treaty in June 2007 and the idea of holding a "second chance referendum" - after the French and Dutch people's rejection of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in 2005, as after the Danish rejection of the Maastricht Treaty and the Irish rejection of the Nice Treaty - is the expression of this "denial of democracy", which attests to "a curious conception of democracy", consisting "in considering that the people are wrong until they have approved the project of those in power". In such a conception, "it is no longer the elite who represent the people", but rather "the people who are summoned to represent the elite's choice". This European democracy, which some today consider to be a "democracy without the people", is today plagued by a steady increase in abstention, a volatile electorate, the rise of extremist parties, and the development of protest votes and actions".

North/South relations. There's a sort of "professional developers' superiority complex" that suggests that the only possible forms of social, political and economic organization are, and can only come from the West. Without an effort to adapt, both internally and externally, externally-conceived democratic and economic policy formulations to the specific conditions peculiar to the countries of the South, in order to enable their re-appropriation, it would be difficult to initiate reliable and effective good governance. The congenital shortcoming of the North/South cooperation system lies in the method of approach that has been favored for decades in development partnership. Today, we agree with Alfred Otto HIRSCHMAN that:

*"We must be wary of theories which, because of their high degree of abstraction, seem perfectly neutral with regard to the type of economic system, but are often only applicable in the circumstances in which they were conceived.(...) If they are useful, they will focus on variables which in a particular system are both of strategic importance and susceptible to change; the more useful they are in one system, the less likely they are to be useful in a completely different one. In trying to apply them, however, we run the risk of taking a long detour instead of a shortcut, because once we've become accustomed to looking at reality through the lens of a certain theory, we risk remaining incapable of seeing it as it is for a long time to come"*⁷².

The failure of previous development experiments (technology transfer from industrialized countries to Third World countries) not only calls for a detour through the obligation of a total revision of North/South conceptions, but must also serve as a mirror if we are to emerge from the end of the tunnel. These failed experiments should, however, lead to greater modesty and respect for other ways of life and systems of organization and development⁷³. At a

time when the current international economic and financial crisis is confirming the crisis of capitalism and international neo-liberalism, there is an urgent need to consider other alternative models of financial regulation at global level, especially as the Bretton Woods institutions, which have proved congenitally incapable of providing timely responses to curb the global recession, are increasingly crumbling under the weight of their lack of legitimacy, leading many observers to advocate their restructuring in the short term.

⁷² Alfred Otto HIRSCHMAN, 1964, *Stratégie du développement économique. Économie et humanisme, développement et civilisation*, Paris, Ouvrières, 246 p.

⁷³ This is the approach advocated by Daniel FINO, 1996, who argues that the concepts that dominate the field of development cooperation are still trapped in a reductive vision of relations between North and South: on the one hand, there are the poor, the beggars, the peoples to be developed, the ignorant, and on the other, the rich, the generous, the developed citizens, those with knowledge. The author does, however, advocate the search for new avenues of economic and social self-organization within the development cooperation system. This means turning the traditional top-down process of cooperation on its head, in a system that works from the bottom (local populations) to the top (donors). For FINO, this means abandoning the concept of "needs" in favor of "local capacities to be strengthened". Daniel FINO, 1996, "De l'aide internationale au renforcement des capacités nationales", in D. FINO (Dir.), *Impasses et promesses. L'ambiguïté de la coopération au développement*, Nouveaux cahiers de l'UIED, Paris, PUF, pp.13-26. See also Touré, Ibrahima, 2009, *Décentralisation et gouvernance locale. Analyse des dynamiques de pouvoir et des effets socio-politiques de la réforme politico-administrative*

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